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PAGE 001
TOT: 080636Z MAR 91

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST BRIEF

FOR 08 MARCH 1991.

[CONTENTS]

1. IRAQ-KUWAIT: SITUATION REPORT

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REGIME LASHING OUT AT RESISTANCE

BAGHDAD IS TAKING INCREASINGLY DRACONIAN MEASURES TO CRUSH THE
REBELLION BEFORE IT BECOMES A FULL-BLOWN CIVIL WAR.

PRESS REPORTS NOTE WIDESPREAD REGIME ATROCITIES AGAINST REBELS AND
CIVILIANS.

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PAGE 002
TOT: 080636Z MAR 91

TEHRAN ALMOST CERTAINLY HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN IRAQI SHIA AND KURDISH GROUPS BASED IN IRAN TO PUT MORE PRESSURE ON SADDAM, AS WELL AS TO INCREASE IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN THE IRAQI OPPOSITION. SO FAR, SHIA-KURDISH COOPERATION HAS NOT TRANSLATED INTO BATTLEFIELD COORDINATION. ALTHOUGH REBEL SHIAS AND KURDS MAY TRY TO SYNCHRONIZE THE TIMING OF MILITARY ATTACKS AGAINST REGIME FORCES IN THEIR RESPECTIVE OPERATING AREAS, THEIR DIVERGENT POLITICAL GOALS, AS WELL AS ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES, PROBABLY WILL HINDER COOPERATION.

IRAQ CALLS FOR STANDDOWN ON TERRORIST ATTACKS

AN UNATTRIBUTED STATEMENT ON IRAN'S DOMESTIC RADIO WEDNESDAY WARNED US TROOPS IN SOUTHERN IRAQ TO EXPECT TERRORIST INCIDENTS LIKE THOSE THAT TARGETED THE US MARINES IN BEIRUT. CLAIMING THE US WAS CAUSING CRISIS, TENSION, AND INSTABILITY IN THE REGION, THE STATEMENT ACCUSED THIS COUNTRY OF TRYING TO CONSOLIDATE A PERMANENT PRESENCE IN THE REGION AND WARNED THAT SUCH A MOVE WOULD INCITE ANTI-US SENTIMENTS WITH THE REGION'S MUSLIMS.

IRANIAN DELEGATION IN SYRIA

IRANIAN VICE PRESIDENT HABIBI AND FOREIGN MINISTER VELAYATI ARRIVED IN DAMASCUS TODAY FOR DISCUSSIONS ON "MUTUAL INTERESTS AND REGIONAL ISSUES," ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS.

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